

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

December 12, 2006

On June 7, 2006, on my motion, the Board directed the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable), the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and County Counsel to report back with a detailed implementation plan to launch a Child Care Program Quality Rating System in Los Angeles County.

In response, the Roundtable, with concurrence of the CAO and County Counsel, developed the Steps to Excellence Program (STEP). STEP is intended to:

- Provide parents with clear information on the quality of individual child care centers and family child care homes.
- Distinguish programs that are meeting higher program standards.
- Create an incentive for programs to achieve and maintain high standards, with particular focus on the programs only meeting basic licensing standards.
- Build a case for linking reimbursement rates to program quality.
- Mobilize new and existing training resources so that centers and family child care providers are prepared to meet STEP standards.

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- Provide benchmarks to determine if the quality of care in individual program or communities is improving over time, and
- Ensure that parents in the most underserved areas of the County have access to information as to the quality of the child care programs they rely on.

The Roundtable's October 12 report on the STEP proposal recommends a three year pilot program to be implemented in at least nine communities, including Florence/Firestone, as well as selected areas of Wilmington, Pacoima/Arleta, Inglewood, Long Beach, Palmdale, Pasadena, Pomona and Santa Monica. These communities were identified for the prevalence of low income, underserved families, as well as the opportunity to partner with local cities on this effort.

The pilot is expected to begin July 1, 2007, at a cost not to exceed \$782,000 per year.

The Roundtable and the Office of Child Care have identified \$213,000 in annual funding from the State Child Care Planning Grant that can be expended to fund staff coordination of the STEP Program. The County of Los Angeles should also fund a portion of the STEP pilot project, at \$200,000 per year for three years. The balance should be sought from other funding sources that recognize and value the importance of good quality early childhood development, such as First 5 LA.

I, THEREFORE MOVE, that the Board of Supervisors approve the 3-year Steps to Excellence Program (STEP) pilot, as a means of ensuring that parents who purchase child care services have access to reliable information on the quality of child care settings.

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I FURTHER MOVE that the Chief Administrative Officer:

- Report back in 30 days with a plan to fund in part the first year of the STEP program pilot, at an amount no less than \$200,000.
- Prepare a five signature letter to the First 5 LA Commission, informing them of the Board's investment in the Child Care Quality Rating System pilot, and to request their participation in funding.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Policy Roundtable for Child Care provide monthly status reports on implementation of the STEP pilot program, starting in February 2007, then report on a quarterly basis beginning July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2010.

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